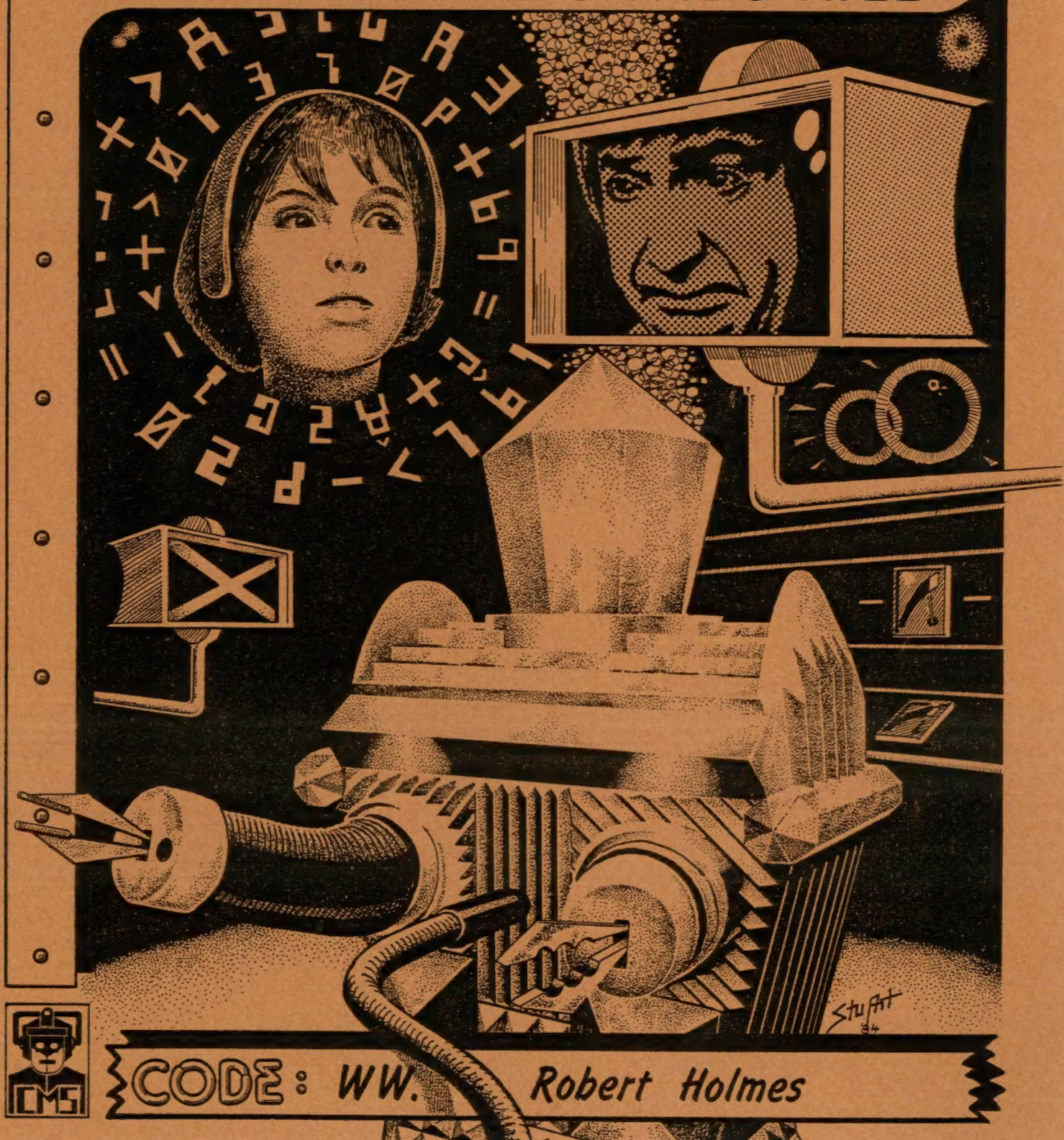
THE KROTONS

DOCTOR WHO

AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE & TIME



CODE: WW. Robert Holmes

The TARDIS materialised on a twin-sunned planet with an atmosphere containing ozone and sulphur -very bracing! There, Jamie, Zoe and I became involved in the problems of the native Gonds, who had been subjected to a form of self-perpetuating slavery by two alien Krotons.

These Krotons had arrived thousands of years before in their craft, the Dynatrope. Their life-system was based on Tellurium and they had been able to revert to a crystalline slurry when they 'exhausted', to be re-animated at some later date by drawing on the mental energy of others; a very efficient method of existing through time!

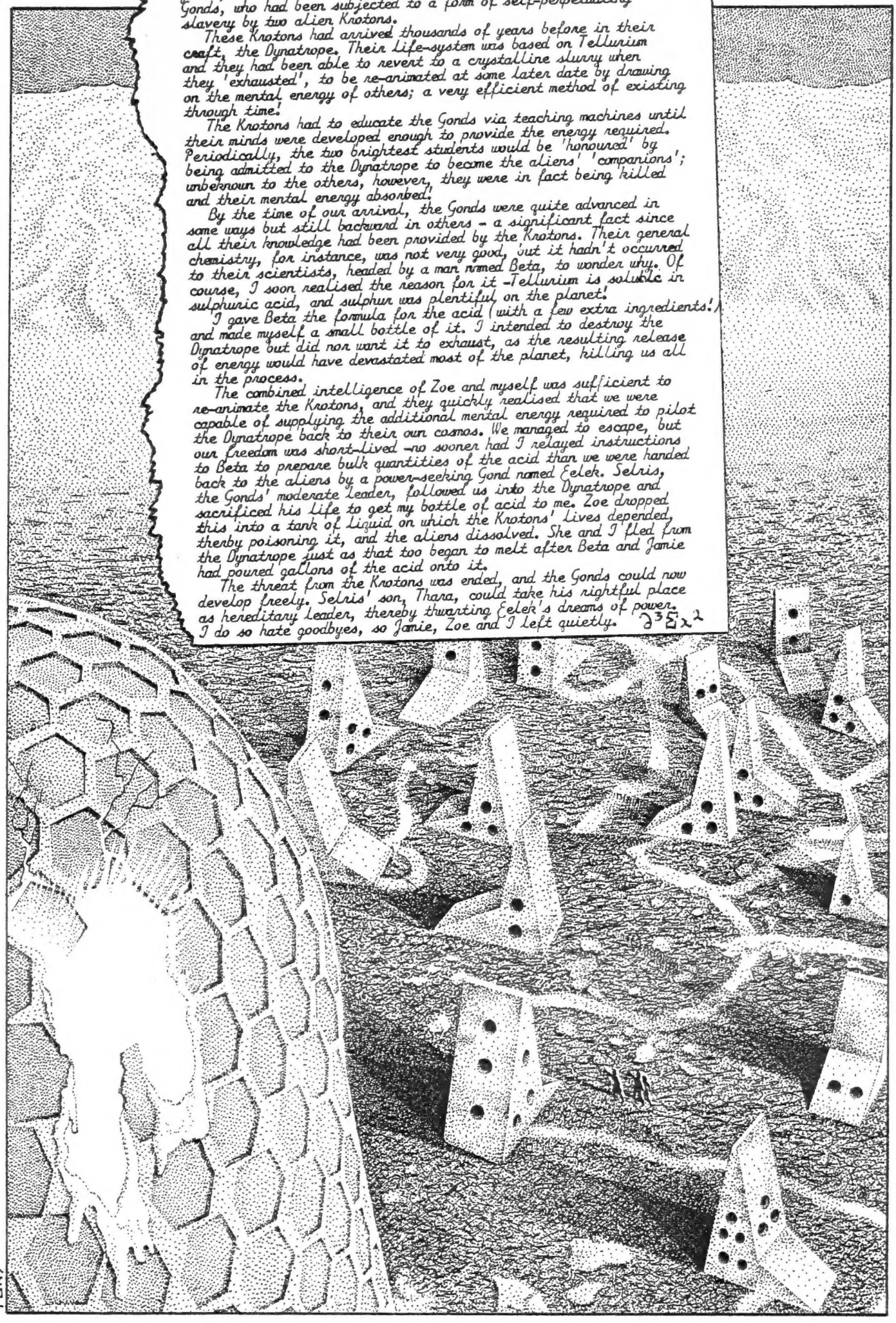
The Krotons had to educate the Gonds via teaching machines until their minds were developed enough to provide the energy required. Periodically, the two brightest students would be 'honoured' by being admitted to the Dynatrope to become the aliens' 'companions'; unbeknown to the others, however, they were in fact being killed and their mental energy absorbed!

By the time of our arrival, the Gonds were quite advanced in some ways but still backward in others - a significant fact since all their knowledge had been provided by the Krotons. Their general chemistry, for instance, was not very good, but it hadn't occurred to their scientists, headed by a man named Beta, to wonder why. Of course, I soon realised the reason for it -Tellurium is soluble in sulphuric acid, and sulphur was plentiful on the planet!

I gave Beta the formula for the acid (with a few extra ingredients!) and made myself a small bottle of it. I intended to destroy the Dynatrope but did not want it to exhaust, as the resulting release of energy would have devastated most of the planet, killing us all in the process.

The combined intelligence of Zoe and myself was sufficient to re-animate the Krotons, and they quickly realised that we were capable of supplying the additional mental energy required to pilot the Dynatrope back to their own cosmos. We managed to escape, but our freedom was short-lived -no sooner had I relayed instructions to Beta to prepare bulk quantities of the acid than we were handed back to the aliens by a power-seeking Gond named Eelek. Selris, the Gonds' moderate leader, followed us into the Dynatrope and sacrificed his life to get my bottle of acid to me. Zoe dropped this into a tank of liquid on which the Krotons' lives depended, thereby poisoning it, and the aliens dissolved. She and I fled from the Dynatrope just as that too began to melt after Beta and Jamie had poured gallons of the acid onto it.

The threat from the Krotons was ended, and the Gonds could now develop freely. Selris' son, Thara, could take his rightful place as hereditary leader, thereby thwarting Eelek's dreams of power. I do so hate goodbyes, so Jamie, Zoe and I left quietly. $\partial^3 \Sigma \lambda^2$



TONY

DRAMA EXTRACT

As the Doctor and Zoe looked on, Selris picked out the sliver of encrypted tape and examined it carefully. "5197: selected:female:Zo-Gond," he read.

"Zo-Gond?" For a moment the Doctor was lost. Then the penny dropped. "Zoe - they mean you!"

"They have chosen you as their companion," Selris affirmed.

"And we all know what happens to them, don't we?" The tinge of panic in the Doctor's voice alarmed Zoe.

"Oh Doctor, what shall I do?"

"She doesn't have to go, does she?" asked the Doctor, anxiously. Sadly the Gond leader bowed his head and said nothing. "Well, does she, or doesn't she?" insisted the Doctor.

"I'm afraid she must. Complete obedience is the Krotons' first command, and if we fail to obey..."

"...They'll destroy you," completed the Doctor. Angrily he rounded on his companion. "Now do you see what you've done, fooling around with this stupid machine?" he said, pointing at the now silent teaching system.

"But I'm not a Gond," protested Zoe wildly.

"But the machine doesn't know that!" Spurred into action, the Doctor hastened down the steps, Zoe anxiously following.

"Where are you going?" she pleaded.

"I'm going to take the test," he replied, pausing before the teaching machine and busying himself with the headset and controls. "I can't let you go in there alone. Now what do I do?"

"Sit down and put this headset on. Now press the button." The Doctor remained motionless. None too gently Zoe pulled the headset to one side, freeing one of the Doctor's ears. "Press the button!" she yelled.

"All right, there's no need to shout. Now go away and don't fuss me. No, come back, what's this? It's all right, I know. Right, fire away, I'm ready."

Cautiously, after a further reminder from Zoe, the Doctor stabbed the main button and began tackling a series of mathematical problems which flashed up on the computer screen. After a few seconds it became clear he was not having much success. Zoe tugged his headset. "Doctor, you've got it all wrong."

"Oh dear, I've been working in square roots. Can I have that again, please?" he asked the machine, hopefully.

"They don't give you second shots," Zoe protested, only to find, on once again reminding the Doctor about pressing the button, that she was wrong. It did.

Selris joined her, and together they watched the Doctor's progress. "This is the most advanced machine," the Gond indicated. "Perhaps he can't answer the questions."

"Of course he can," defended Zoe. "The Doctor's almost as clever as I am."

After a moment or two more, the Doctor's face again crumpled. "Oh, now what have I done?" he exclaimed, more for his own benefit than for the others'.

Zoe peered over his shoulder. "Oh Doctor, you've divided instead of multiplying. You must concentrate."

"I am, Zoe, I am." Exasperated, he pressed the button once more, unaware that his every movement was now the subject of intense scrutiny by a machine with the Krotons' home.

Eventually he completed the routine, and sat back with a self-satisfied smile across his face. "Yes...I think that's rather better. I think I've scored more than you have, Zoe."

Zoe shot him a radioactive glance. "You answered more questions!"

STORY REVIEW

Trevor Wayne

Once again the ever erratic TARDIS has brought the Doctor and his companions to a planet which is ninety-nine percent studio with the barest minimum of filmed exterior. Here the time travellers are presented with a not altogether unfamiliar situation; a post-holocaust wasteland and a surviving human population that has been enslaved by something un-human. This is, or rather was, the planet of the Gonds, whose uninspiring name and nature strongly suggest some relationship with the Dulcians; perhaps it is that they are both descended from and are rather base forms of the Thals. It is often said - incorrectly, it seems - that the new masters of the planet, the crystalline 'villains' whose name forms the title of the story, the Krotons, were based upon a design submitted to a children's design-a-monster competition. Because of this it is customary to deride them as being made of old egg boxes, etc. However, these large creatures with no recognisable human features - save for a rudimentary head and flexible, almost tentacle-like arms with pincer claws - and their deep, echoing voices are far more disturbing than the tiny, spikey-headed, tinny-voiced Quarks could ever be. It must be admitted, though, that they still fall some considerable way short of the Dalek or Cyberman class. Perhaps Robert Holmes should have thought harder about the name; in Greek mythology Kroton (sometimes rendered Croton) was a victim of Herakles, the greatest of the heroes, and the name literally translates as 'dog-tick'!

"Self perpetuating slavery" is the Doctor's analysis of the situation on this planet; but like most societies it contains the seeds of its own destruction. The Krotons totally dominate the Gond culture and have attained an almost god-like status. Their crystal-machine abode, the Dynatrope, has literally grown up around the Gonds' city, thus rendering both the environment and the society of the Gonds claustrophobic. An evening out - or rather in - with a party of Gonds would be a very dull affair. Having subdued the population, the Krotons now provide them with everything they need. As the area beyond the city is barren, all the food the Gonds eat must be produced artificially within the city, and the Krotons have provided machines that impart knowledge to their subjects. It is among these machines in the Learning Hall that the terrible secret of the benevolence of the Krotons is revealed; they are like vampires preying on the mental energy - the brain power - of the Gonds, trying to amass sufficient to reanimate themselves fully and rejoin the war from which they were shot down some thousands of years ago. This may explain why they have been on the planet so long! But they only have themselves to blame; they have left curious lacunae in the syllabus, and as a result the Gonds are ignorant of a lot of basic chemistry. The problem for the Krotons is that their structure is based on a substance which is readily soluble in sulphuric acid...and as one sniff of the air tells the Doctor and Zoe, this planet is rich in sulphur (although to Jamie the nasty smell has no significance beyond rotton eggs!). To prevent this weakness being discovered, the Krotons have conditioned the Gonds to be servile, and therefore unimaginative, and have perpetuated the belief that the world beyond the city is still hostile to life. However, this has done nothing to improve significantly the general level of intelligence of the Gonds.

Periodically the Krotons choose the two brightest students from among the Gonds to be their "companions". These students pass into the Dynatrope and after their apotheosis are never seen by the other Gonds again. What actually happens, as the

Doctor almost immediately discovers, is that they are drained of their mental energy and then promptly vapourised, joining the generally noisome air beyond the Dynatrope.

When Vana (apparently the only female Gond - perhaps someone should look at the ratio of men to women in 'Doctor Who') is chosen to be one of the companions of the Krotons her boyfriend, Thara, the son of the Gond leader, Selris, protests. Perhaps not all the Gonds are as stupid as they seem. The Doctor, Jamie and Zoe intervene to save Vana from vapourisation (too poetic an end for such a vapid individual) and the proof against the Krotons is now available for all to see. Now another voice of discontentment is raised among the Gonds. Eelek, the ambitious deputy leader of the Council played with subtle, milky-voiced menace by the splendid Philip Madoc, is a demagogue who capitalises on the discontentment felt among some of the Gonds, perhaps already disenchanted with the Krotons because in their day they were not chosen as the creatures' companions. As the Krotons begin to take action to put down the burgeoning rebellion, cracks are starting to show in the structure of the society they have cultivated for so long. It only takes one well-aimed blow from the Doctor to shatter the whole matrix and dissolve the Dynatrope.

Here is the greatest weakness of this tale; the inbuilt vulnerability of the Krotons and the ultimate fragility of their hold over the Gonds. Although the story fits neatly into the usual pattern of those written for the series, it was not originally penned for 'Doctor Who' and was doubtless requisitioned as the production team found themselves suddenly desperately short of material. Some re-writing was doubtless called for, but my favourite sequence in the entire story was I am sure one of those thought up by Patrick Troughton in collaboration with Wendy Padbury and Frazer Hines over lunch during rehearsals. It is the exchange between the Doctor and Zoe over the teaching machines. Both take the tests, Zoe on her own and the Doctor subsequently, not without help from his young companion and not without mistakes. Eventually the Doctor scores a higher mark - by virtue of answering more questions - and when Selris expresses his amazement at this Zoe remarks: "Of course the Doctor knows the answers, he's almost as clever as I am."

Jamie, deep in the shadow of the dazzling brilliance of Zoe, is reduced to hanging around the Doctor's coat tails and the boldly-patterned hem of Zoe's brief skirt. He does have a chance to use his brawn when one of Eelek's hot-heads turns nasty, but an attempt to rescue the Doctor and Zoe from the Krotons nearly leads to his own vapourisation - his companions having already made good their own escape. It is at this juncture that the oldest 'regular' in the series, the TARDIS itself, provides a surprise: the Hostile Action Displacement System - HADS - moves the ship a short distance to take it out of the range of a threatening Kroton.

There is a nice sense of growing menace throughout the story that culminates in the Krotons actually emerging from the Dynatrope. However, by this time the means to destroy them is well-known to the Doctor, the Gond scientist Beta and the viewers and at this point Eelek almost becomes the principal villain. But it must be said that none of the Gonds or the Krotons are as interesting as the regular characters, and they simply merge to form a background, yet another variation on a familiar theme. The story is saved from becoming merely tedious by its own brevity and by sparkling performances from the three stars who go through their paces with unflagging enthusiasm and an infectious sense of fun that brightens up the whole thing and leaves the viewer with a happy glow.

SPACE & TIME

Editor.....Stephen James Walker
Art Editor.....Drog
Design Editor.....Deanne Holding
Cover.....Stuart Glazebrook
Diary Page Art.....Tony Clark
Contributors this issue.....J. Jeremy Bentham
John Bok
Terrance Dicks
Gary Hopkins
Trevor Wayne
Distribution.....'CyberMark Services'
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Tim Robins and Gary Hopkins
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Editorial address.....9, Tall Elms Close
Bromley
Kent
BR2 0TT

SPACE & TIME

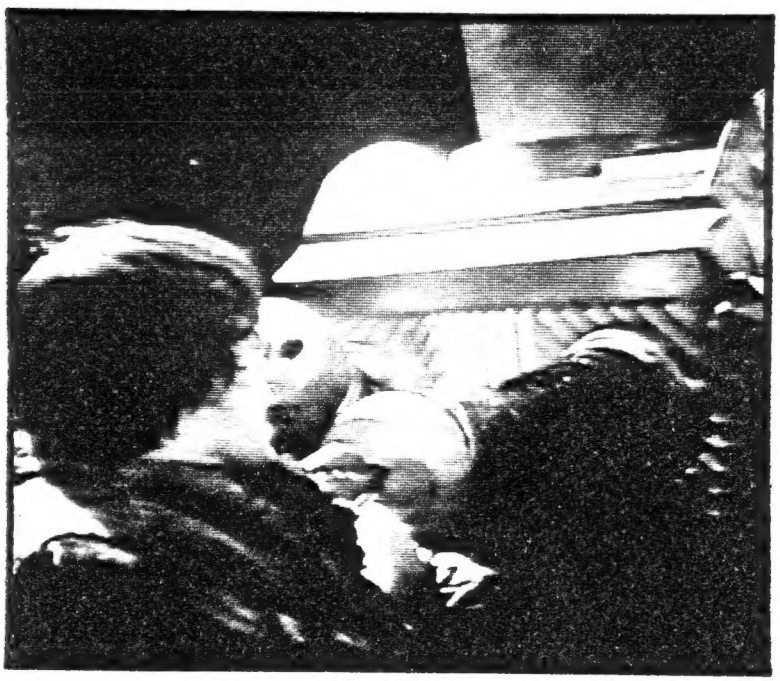
TERRANCE DICKS

Susan James

Born in East Ham in 1935, Terrance Dicks was educated at East Ham Grammar School, from where he went on to read English at Downing College, Cambridge. This was followed by two years' National Service in the Army, after which he got a job in an advertising agency, working as an advertising copywriter. This lasted for five years, during which time he started writing radio scripts as a sideline. As more and more of these were commissioned, he eventually grew confident enough to take the gamble of leaving his job and becoming a freelance writer full-time. This led to a number of plays and a comedy series for radio, and, eventually, work in television on programmes like 'The Avengers' and 'Crossroads'. It was at this point that he became involved with 'Doctor Who'.

The Script Editor at that time, Derrick Sherwin, had made it quite clear from the outset that he was not particularly happy working on the series, and had no intention of making a career of it. He had been offered another job which he was keen to accept, but before he could do so he was expected to find and 'groom' his own replacement. Dicks had met and worked with Sherwin on a number of occasions previously and had got on very well with him, but it came as a complete surprise when Sherwin telephoned him out of the blue one day and asked him if he would like to become Script Editor of 'Doctor Who'. Dicks, who had always been a science fiction fan and a regular viewer of the series, had little hesitation in accepting the offer, particularly since it presented the prospect of a regular income and the relative security of a three month contract. It was only later he discovered that, in his own words, "they had (already) had two other goes at finding people for the job and neither of them had lasted more than a few months."

When Dicks was first contacted by Derrick Sherwin, the scripts of 'The Enemy of the World' (Serial "PP") were just being completed. His first visit to the studios, however, coincided with the post-production and editing work on the second Yeti story, 'The Web of Fear' (Serial "QQ"), and he remembers seeing playbacks of the sixth episode.



For the next few months Dicks 'trailed' Sherwin in the job, learning the ropes. He had little to do with the editing of 'Fury From the Deep' (Serial "RR"), but helped out with amendments to the script of 'The Wheel in Space (Serial "SS") and thereafter contributed to a greater or lesser degree to most of the subsequent stories, including a number which fell through and were never transmitted. During this period his official title was that of 'Assistant Script Editor', but it was not to be very long before he gained his first solo credit as a fully-fledged Script Editor...

HOLMES FOR HIRE

Terrance Dicks

I suppose you could say 'The Krotons' was one of those rare examples of a 'Doctor Who' story being put together at leisure.

The beginnings of it were long before I joined the show. Bob (Holmes), who had been a journalist at ITV for quite some time, was already a reasonably experienced writer, now looking for an outlet to write drama scripts for the BBC. He had done some series work and so already knew something of the system by which freelance writers operated, where the first thing you sent in was a three or four page story outline of the script you had in mind.

Bob had put up the idea of 'The Krotons' to another Script Editor some time ago, but it had been turned down. Soon after I joined 'Doctor Who' as deputy Script Editor he sent it to Derrick Sherwin who, in turn, passed it on to me. I liked the idea, but because at the time we did not have a slot for it, I was told I could commission it as a four-parter in reserve, or as one for the next season. Either way there was no particular haste as no-one was in a hurry for it.

I worked with Bob on it in a very leisurely fashion and the script became a sort of hobby for me to keep me out of mischief. With some pride I can say it was the first completely independent thing I had ever done on 'Doctor Who'.

The script writing situation at the BBC was very bad when I joined, though thankfully it has improved a lot since then. The system was that you paid a writer about £100 for a Story Breakdown - which is where you ask the writer to detail a complete scene-by-scene account of the story as he sees it. If the script is then commissioned, that £100, or whatever, comes out of his script fee. A very unfair situation all round, especially as 'Doctor Who' was quite seriously under-budgeted in those days. Consequently, Script Editors were very cautious about paying out for Story Breakdowns which might never emerge into scripts, and writers who did get commissioned, I felt, were being asked to do the hardest job of all - script production - for very little reward. So I was quite happy being given such a free hand getting 'The Krotons' off the ground. We were then, unlike now, always desperate for good scripts.

Anyway, sometime shortly afterwards everybody got suddenly very unhappy with a comedy script idea being worked out between Peter Bryant, Derrick Sherwin and Dick Vosburgh. David Maloney had just joined as Director, only one and a half scripts were in, and everybody hated them. Panic and despair quickly ensued, with all concerned daily getting more and more disgruntled. I did some work on it, but it was, with hindsight, a doomed project from the start.

Eventually we all got together round a table for a "What are we going to do?" meeting; at which point I said I had a very good four-part script already in the cupboard which we could use instead. David said, "Let me see it." He went away, only to call back a short time later pronouncing 'The Krotons' to be workable.

That was about the end of my involvement with the story. David did nearly all the camera script rewrites himself when it became obvious the Krotons could do little more than stand still and loom menacingly. As I said, we were under-budgeted, so with the little money we could give them it was hardly surprising Visual Effects could not make the Krotons live up to our expectations. So where the script might have read, 'Kroton moves forward and fires gun', David amended it to read, 'Kroton stands still and fires gun'.

Whatever the limitations of that story, none of its faults lay with the script and, as usually happens in these instances, I quickly latched onto Bob as one of my regular writers I knew could be relied upon to produce good scripts on time. As things did transpire it was Derrick who commissioned the next story from Bob, but that was only because I was heavily involved then with a not inconsiderable marathon effort called 'The War Games'.

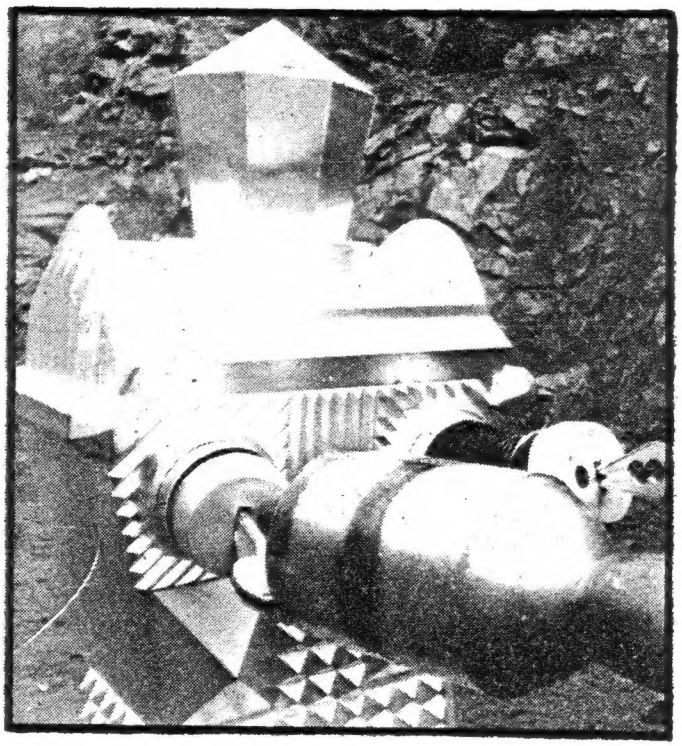
TECHNICAL OBSERVATIONS

'The Krotons' almost never made it to the small screen. Robert Holmes, a journalist looking for an opening into drama scriptwriting, submitted an idea for a one hour science fiction script called 'The Space Trap' to Roger Parkes, Script Editor of BBC2's 'Out of the Unknown' series. His quota of stories full for the coming season, Parkes found he could not use the idea, and it was subsequently sent to the 'Doctor Who' office, where it landed on Terrance Dicks' desk. Although impressed with the story, Dicks likewise could find no slot for it. He was, however, allowed to commission it as a 'reserve' script, and spent some time with Holmes developing it into a four part serial. Then a lengthily-planned script for a comedy 'Doctor Who' story, worked out by Dick Vosburgh and Derrick Sherwin, fell through at the last minute, creating a four-episode gap in the schedule. Dicks put forward 'The Krotons' as a ready-made substitute, and this was readily accepted by Derrick Sherwin and the rest of the team.

In Robert Holmes' original story, Beta was the scientist who questioned the domination of the Krotons after the hero, Thara, rescued his beloved Vana from death outside the Dynatrope. With modification for 'Doctor Who', the Doctor gained much of Beta's role, Jamie got many of Thara's action scenes and Vana shared some of her experiences with Zoe.

Requested back by Peter Bryant after his successful salvation of 'The Mind Robber' (Serial "UU"), David Maloney once more brought his technical skills to bear directing this story. The principal 'trick' he employed was the use of two telecine playback machines, rather than one. This facility enabled him to overlay or superimpose one piece of film with another, creating some cheap but revolutionary visual effects, even within the confines of Studio D, Lime Grove. By using the two machines with careful editing and ordering of his film material, Maloney was also able to cut from film to film, whereas it was normally only possible to cut from film to studio. Thus, for example, he could cut from a filmed exterior scene to a filmed model shot without the need to include a 'bridging' studio scene as the second piece of film is 'run up'.

These techniques were very much in evidence in the effects-bound scenes of the Doctor and Zoe venturing inside the Dynatrope for the first time. Much of the live action was shot on film at Ealing, with a fish-eye lens being



fitted to the camera for the mind draining sequences to distort the travellers' faces. The whirling optical effects were nothing more than blurred footage of a Catherine Wheel firework, captured on film and superimposed over the live action telecine using the dual machine process. Other applications included the forming of the Krotons within the slurry tank and a smoke overlay film to enhance the smoke sprays representing the dispersion effect (all instances of which were shot on film for reasons of controlability).

This was the last story of the 'Sixties not to feature any specially composed incidental music. Brian Hodgson was asked to provide Radiophonic mood effects instead.

The BBC Graphics Department supplied the animated graphics sequence of moving numbers and symbols which appeared on the monitor fitted inside the teaching machine used by Zoe and the Doctor.

Holmes described the Krotons as crystalline "silver men" in his script, but realising elaborate crystal costumes was beyond the scope and budget of this modest story, the job was farmed out to Bill King and the 'Trading Post' company. Using virus shapes as a design basis, two robot-like Kroton casings were built on wood and wire frames with vacuum-formed plastic panels fitted over vinyl underskirts. The heads were on metal runners, enabling them to spin freely when fitted with small electric motors - as used in the scenes around episode three's cliff-hanger.

'Trading Post' also built an expanded polystyrene model Kroton for effects work. This was used in the scene where the Krotons try to disperse the TARDIS - the model plus smoke effects were overlaid onto a caption slide of the wasteland with the TARDIS in view, which was then faded to a near-identical slide but without the TARDIS, the intercut being hidden by the smoke. The model was seen dissolving in episode four, courtesy of an acetone spray.

Acetone was also used to destroy the expanded foam plastic model of the Dynatrope in episode four, the surrounding model huts being constructed of a different material and therefore unaffected.

To save heaving the full-size TARDIS up onto a ledge as the HADS defensive mechanism operates, a model Police Box was used instead, false perspective on the surrounding rocks completing the illusion. This model was also used for the dematerialisation shot which closes the story.

A collapsing ceiling model merged with live action film of the Gonds trying to bring down the Dynatrope foundations climaxes episode three and begins episode four. The aftermath scene, as Zoe revives the Doctor, was done in the studio with a superimposed fog-loop giving an impression of drifting dust.

As with 'The Abominable Snowmen' (Serial "NN") this story received no article or photographic publicity in 'The Radio Times', the only instances of this occurring in the 'Sixties.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

SERIAL "WW" — FOUR EPISODES — BLACK AND WHITE

PART 1	-	28th. December 1968
PART 2	-	4th. January 1969
PART 3	-	11th. January 1969
PART 4	-	18th. January 1969

CAST

Doctor Who.....Patrick Troughton
Jamie.....Frazer Hines
Zoe.....Wendy Padbury

Selris.....James Copeland
Abu.....Terence Brown
Vana.....Madeleine Mills
Thara.....Gilbert Wynne
Eelek.....Philip Madoc
Axus.....Richard Ireson
Beta.....James Cairncross
Student.....Bronson Shaw
Custodian.....Maurice Selwyn
Kroton voices.....Roy Skelton
Patrick Tull
Krotons.....Robert Grant
Miles Northover
Robert La'Bassiere
Gonds.....Robin Scott, Peter Rann
David Melbourne, Nick Rutter
Robert Hayward, Mark Johnson
Reg Nardi, Ronnie Chance
Roger Charles, Alex Hood
Keith Ashton, Justine Elliott
Patricia Matthews, Wendy Wilson
Sylvia Steele

TECHNICAL CREDITS

Production Assistant...Edwina Verner
Assistant Floor Manager.David Tilley
Assistant.....Raquel Ebbutt
Grams Operator.....Ron Arnett
Vision Mixer.....David Langford
Floor Assistant....Maurice Gallagher
Scene Supervisors.....Reg Lewis
Brian Davis
Lighting.....Howard King
Sound.....John Holmes
Technical Manager.....Fred Wright
Special Sound.....Brian Hodgson
Costumes.....Bobi Bartlett
Make-up.....Sylvia James
Script Editor.....Terrance Dicks
Designer.....Raymond London
Producer.....Peter Bryant
Director.....David Maloney